



REPORT

To: Chair and Directors

Report Number: PS-BRD-025

From: Protective Services

Date: July 23, 2026

Subject: Ministerial Order M214 – Old Fort Geotechnical Assessment

RECOMMENDATION: [Corporate Unweighted]

That the Regional Board send a letter to the Minister of Emergency Management and Climate Readiness requesting that the Ministry either (a) approve and fund the scope of work as proposed by the Peace River Regional District's qualified professional for Phase 2 and Phase 3 of the Old Fort geotechnical assessment, or (b) amend or rescind Ministerial Order No. M214 to reflect the scope of work the Ministry is prepared to approve and fund; and advising the Minister that, absent (a) or (b), the Peace River Regional District is unable to fulfil the requirements of Ministerial Order No. M214.

BACKGROUND/RATIONALE:

On May 21, 2026, the Minister of Emergency Management and Climate Readiness (EMCR) issued [Ministerial Order No. M214](#), 'Peace River Regional District Emergency Measures Order' (the Order), under [Section 68 of the Emergency and Disaster Management Act](#), requiring the Peace River Regional District (PRRD) to undertake a geotechnical assessment to identify the risk to individuals and property in an assessment area bounded by Evacuation Order #1 and Evacuation Alert #1 issued by the PRRD due to the landslide-related closure of the provincial highway, Old Fort Road.

In their letter accompanying the Order, the Minister of Emergency Management and Climate Readiness indicated that "EMCR remains prepared to fund this work."

The Order required the PRRD to initiate by May 26, 2026, a geotechnical assessment that must:

- (a) be conducted by a qualified professional;*
- (b) assess the geotechnical conditions and hazards in the assessment area;*
- (c) assess the level of risk to property in the assessment area and the level of risk to individuals in the assessment area;*
- (d) provide recommendations to*
 - i. respond to the Landslide emergency, including preventing and reducing risk of adverse effects to property and individuals in the assessment area, and*
 - ii. recover from the Landslide emergency, including measures to restore safety of and reduce future risk to property and to individuals in the assessment area.*

In summary, the Minister's Order required professional opinions on both imminent and long-term (future) risk, and recommendations to mitigate or prevent and reduce risk now and in the future to property and individuals within the assessment area.

In compliance with the Order, the PRRD engaged a qualified professional to devise a work plan and cost estimates for the geotechnical assessment required to comply with the Order. The work plan is divided into three phases:

1. “Phase 1 – Opinion on Imminent Risk” (approved and funded by EMCR; work completed)
2. “Phase 2 – Opinion on Quantitative Landslide Risk to Property and Individuals”
3. “Phase 3 – Recommendations to Reduce Future Landslide Risk”

Phase 1, funded by EMCR and completed, assessed whether *current* conditions present an imminent life-safety risk. The professional opinion presented within the assessment supported the PRRD decision to rescind Evacuation Alerts #1 and #2 and further supported EMCR’s decision to discontinue the provision of Emergency Support Services to those who had chosen to remain out of the community even after the reopening of Old Fort Road by the Ministry of Transportation and Transit.

With regard to Phase 2, in a letter to PRRD staff on May 29, 2026, the Assistant Deputy Minister, Readiness, Response and Recovery Operations (the ADM), Ministry of EMCR, advised that EMCR was tentatively prepared to approve the work subject to reduced scope and scale. Further, the ADM declined to approve the recommendation phase of the proposed assessment.

Following the submission of the Phase 1 professional opinion on imminent risk, on June 19, 2026, a discussion on scope and scale for Phase 2 was held between the ADM, their staff, their subject matter expert, PRRD staff and the PRRD’s qualified professional. PRRD staff communicated to EMCR:

- The scope of work contained within the PRRD’s qualified professional’s proposal was expressly designed to meet the clear demands of the Order, and
- Any change to the proposed scope of work would require an amendment to the Order or cancellation of the Order.

The latter point was agreed to by the ADM, and the ADM committed to reviewing the Phase 1 findings and making a determination on the proposed subsequent phases of work within two weeks. On June 26, 2026, PRRD staff wrote to the ADM setting out the basis on which Phase 2 should proceed; EMCR responded on June 29, 2026, advising the matter was under review. On July 7, 2026, EMCR advised that it had “provided the Minister with information” and was “awaiting her direction.” PRRD staff wrote again on July 15, 2026, seeking an update on further geotechnical assessment and on a possible amendment to the Order. As of July 16, 2026, no approval or reconsideration has been received from EMCR for Phase 2 or Phase 3.

The Order is broad in scope, and none of the completed or proposed geotechnical assessment work phases meet the demands of the Order on their own. Without approval of the remaining phases or an amendment to the Order, the PRRD is unable to fulfil the requirements of the Order as it stands.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS:

1. That the Regional Board provide further direction.

STRATEGIC PLAN RELEVANCE:

☒ Not Applicable to Strategic Plan

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATION(S):

Funding for emergency response activities, including geotechnical assessments, is made available from EMCR to the PRRD under conditions established by EMCR Financial Standards and processes. To date the PRRD has received from EMCR a funding commitment for Phase 1 only.

COMMUNICATIONS CONSIDERATION(S):

None at this time.

OTHER CONSIDERATION(S):

None at this time.